



Illinois Wesleyan University Digital Commons @ IWU

John Wesley Powell Student Research
Conference

2000, 11th Annual JWP Conference

Apr 15th, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Preference for Natural Things in Preschoolers

Beth Keller

Illinois Wesleyan University

Peter Verbeek, Faculty Advisor

Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>

Beth Keller and Peter Verbeek, Faculty Advisor, "Preference for Natural Things in Preschoolers" (April 15, 2000). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. Paper 13.
<http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2000/posters/13>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Poster Presentation 25

PREFERENCE FOR NATURAL THINGS IN PRESCHOOLERS

Beth Keller and Peter Verbeek*

Department of Psychology, Illinois Wesleyan University

Biophilia is a term coined by biologist E. O. Wilson to label his hypothesis that human beings have an innate affinity toward the natural world. Aspects of biophilia that have been researched to test Wilson's hypothesis include psychological-, aesthetic-, and spiritual correlates as well as the effect of technological advances on the expression of biophilia. Most of this research has been conducted with adults, but a few recent studies have focused on aspects of biophilia in school-age children and adolescents. The present study investigated aspects of biophilia in early development. Fifteen children enrolled in an urban preschool, and 27 children from a rural preschool, were shown a picture book containing paired images depicting natural things and their non-natural counterparts.

The preschoolers were asked which picture of each pair they preferred and their preferences were noted. Two specific hypotheses were tested. First, it was predicted that the children in this study would show a preference for natural things and as such display some degree of biophilia. The second hypothesis predicted that due to their generally greater exposure to subsistence derived from natural things, children from a rural environment would make a proportionally greater number of biophilic choices than children from an urban area.